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AMHERST, MA 01003**AGRO-ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY GRANT PROGRAM
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

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INTRODUCTION

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The Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture invites proposals to fund demonstration projects, feasibility analyses and applied research, designed to address Massachusetts' agriculturally related environmental concerns and agricultural development needs and opportunities. To qualify for consideration, proposals must have practical, near term, commercial application involving new or alternative technologies, practices or organizational arrangements which will stimulate expanded agricultural development, economic activity and employment growth.

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

The Agro-environmental Technology Grant Program may fund projects which will test or demonstrate new technologies to determine their suitability and adaptability to Massachusetts producers. It is the general objective of the Program to support projects which encourage the adoption of environmentally sound practices which will stimulate increased economic activity within the State's agricultural industry.

Proposals must demonstrate the potential for the direct commercial application of the anticipated project results. It is not the purpose of the Program to substitute for business start up, expansion or other types of loans. Rather, it is the purpose of this Program to prove or demonstrate commercial viability of the demonstrated activity so that loan funds, if necessary, may be obtained for full implementation or application of the project results or findings. Therefore, projects should have broad application to have as great an impact as possible on our agricultural industry.

Specific objectives of the Program include, but are not limited to contracting for projects which will:

-Encourage the adoption of environmentally sound production practices and systems

-Assist with diversification and expansion of production

-Enhance agricultural profitability, viability and open space preservation

-Decrease inputs into standard agricultural enterprises

- Promote agricultural resource improvement and conservation
- Create new capital investment and expansion in the food and agriculture industry
- Promote market development and expansion via value added processes or new or improved marketing strategies
- Create jobs in the food and agricultural sector
- Promote the commercial application of new technologies, practices or organizations in Massachusetts agriculture.

The purpose of the proposal is to provide evaluators with a written statement containing sufficient information to demonstrate that the proposed activity is a sound approach to an important area of interest as outlined in the RFP, and would be a project for which the Department would be interested in contracting services. Proposals will be judged principally on their adherence or conformity to the objectives and criteria indicated in this RFP and the cost effectiveness of the proposed activity. A meeting with proposers at a location convenient to the Board of Agriculture may be required for clarification or further examination of proposals before funds are approved.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Applicant Eligibility

Proposals will be accepted from public and private agencies and organizations, business and industry, educational institutions and local governments in Massachusetts. Individuals may apply if they provide letters of endorsement, support or other evidence of commodity group or agricultural industry favor for the proposed project. Public agencies or educational institutions are strongly encouraged to obtain private sector co-sponsors or cooperators. Applicants must demonstrate a proven ability to carry out all elements of the proposed project. All subcontracts to individuals and private businesses and industry must be pre approved by the Department.

Employees or business associates of members of the Board of Food and Agriculture and employees of the MA Department of Food and Agriculture should check with the State Ethics Commission and apply only if within all applicable laws.

Project Eligibility

Projects which involve new or alternative production, processing, distribution or market access technologies, practices or organizational arrangements will be considered. Projects must specifically demonstrate a potential for further development of the Commonwealth's food and agriculture industry to be eligible, and must demonstrate the public benefit to be realized from the project.

Projects which are undertaken in Massachusetts are preferable. Proposals for projects to be undertaken outside Massachusetts will be considered but the applicant must present clear evidence that the Massachusetts food and agriculture industry will benefit.

Funds are intended to be used for new activities or the expansion of qualifying existing activities. Proposals designed to maintain or substitute for existing efforts will not be considered.

As noted above, the potential for near-term commercial application or use of project results is a major consideration in proposal evaluation. Therefore, proposed projects should have a time frame for completion of approximately one year or less. Projects which are exclusively production oriented may be submitted for more than one year with justification provided.

General research studies or analyses which do not have a clear potential for direct implementation will not be considered.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals should be no more than eight (8) pages in length (excluding the cover sheet, budget form and resumes) and must conform to the format described below (cover sheet, ten numbered sections and a proposed budget):

Cover Sheet

Title of proposed project
Name and title of applicant
Address and telephone number of applicant(s)
Amount of funding requested
Duration of project (including beginning and ending dates)
Name, address and telephone number of contact person if other than applicants

1. Identification of Need or Opportunity

Clearly state the specific need, problem or opportunity to be addressed, indicating its importance to the Massachusetts agricultural community and its environmental significance.

2. Project Summary

Briefly describe in one page or less the problem, need or opportunity to be addressed, the project objectives, a description of the effort and the project's intended economic **and environmental** benefits. The overall background and approach used to address the need or opportunity as well as the role the project will play in achieving the objectives identified in the RFP.

3. Statement of Objectives

A clear, concise description of the objectives of the proposed activity is required. Where goals can be expressed numerically, this analysis will be useful. Consistency with the objectives of the Program as indicated in the RFP is critical.

4. Statement of Public Purpose

A description of what public benefit will result from the project, and what specific actions will be performed in order to ensure a specific public benefit or benefits is essential. This section may discuss public access, public education, public use, or other methods of securing public benefit.

5. Deliverables

Deliverables are the anticipated end product of the proposed project which will make it useful. This section should clearly describe the deliverables which will be provided and indicate how these deliverables will be made available to the Department and used by the food and agriculture industry after the project is concluded.

In addition to a written presentation of findings and recommendations, deliverables may be provided in a number of forms including, but not limited to one or more of the following:

- A new or prototype product, machine or process that enhances agricultural and environmental compatibility

- An analysis of economic, scientific or production feasibility for a specific enterprise, organization or development project

- A new production practice, technique or system
- A plan to establish a new business enterprise or service
- A new organization or organizational structure
- Publication of a management, business, marketing or capital formation plan
- An engineering or design plan, drawing or blueprint
- Publication of "how to" guidelines or instructions
- An audio-visual presentation of a new production or processing technique or methodology, or marketing and promotion effort.

It should be noted that the Program places an emphasis on the development of end products which will result in direct commercial application or economic impact.

6. Plan of Work

The plan of work must provide a detailed description of how the proposed project is to be carried out. It should describe the tasks to be performed and a time table for their completion.

7. Potential Use

The practical or commercial application of the proposed project activity is important. This section should indicate by what means the proposed project activity appears to have potential commercial application or may be broadly adaptable in the field. It is essential that environmental and economic benefits be identified and quantified to the maximum extent possible. A plan for information transfer and education should be presented. Where grant funds will be utilized for the purchase of equipment or facilities, the proposal must also include a detailed plan for ensuring public access during a specified period of time to view the facility or equipment in operation.

8. Key Personnel

This section should identify the key people who will be involved in carrying out the proposed project activity and their qualifications for doing so. Subcontractors, consultants and others not directly associated with the applicant must be included. Resumes for key personnel should be included at the end of the proposal.

9. Facilities and Equipment

This section should briefly describe the facilities and equipment, if any, required to carry out the proposed work. Items to be purchased with grant funds should be fully described and justified in this section.

10. Current and Pending Support

A minimum one-to-one applicant funding match is required on all projects. Fifty percent of the match must be provided in the form of cash. The remainder may be in-kind services, or other resources, or combination of same. Our strong preference is for a greater ratio of cash match. Projects with levels of matching above the minimum one-to-one level will have an advantage in the competitive selection process. This match may be provided by the project sponsor or other supporter(s). The cost of previous research leading to the proposed project will not be considered as an eligible cost for matching purposes. Institutional overhead or other indirect costs are not eligible for use as matching funds.

Funds from the Agro-environmental Technology Grant Program may be provided contingent upon receiving necessary funds or resources from other sources, assuming the desired project timetable will be maintained. This section should identify other sources of funds or resources, amount of funding or resources received or to be received, and when they were or are expected to be provided. Evidence of a commitment for other required funds or resources must be provided before Agro-environmental Technology Grant Program funding allocations will be finalized.

Proposed Budget

A proposed budget form, copy attached, must be completed for each project submitted. If additional space is required, a budget may be prepared on a separate sheet using the same format. The budget should indicate expenditures by category, as well as the amount or value of the applicant's matching contribution. Salaries, wages and consulting services must be detailed showing the number and type of personnel directly involved in the project, their hourly or salaried rates, and estimated work days. Sources of all applicant contributions must be indicated and the amount of sponsor cash contributions noted.

Eligible Costs

Contracts of up to \$50,000 per project may be funded under the Program. Reasonableness of the budget requested relative to the proposed work will be considered in evaluating proposals.

Eligible expenses utilizing grant funds under the project include, but are not limited to:

- Salaries and Wages, fringe benefits
(Total personnel costs are limited to 50% of grant amount)
- Consultant services (technical, professional, out of house)
- Travel
- Advertising and Promotion
- Supplies and Materials
- Communication (telephone, postage, printing, etc.)
- Data Processing

Funds cannot be used to cover institutional overhead or other indirect costs such as use of land, buildings or equipment. These costs cannot be used in calculating an applicant match.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to audit the applicant's books and records relating to the performance of the project during and up to five years after the completion of the project.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals for contract under the Agro-environmental Technology Grant Program must be submitted to:

Mr. Craig Richov, Director
Division of Agricultural Development
MA Department of Food and Agriculture
100 Cambridge Street
Boston, MA 02202

An original and ten copies of all proposals submitted in response to this Request For Proposals (RFP) must be received in the Department's Boston offices by 4:00 P.M., December 1. If the 1st shall fall on a Saturday or Sunday, the application period will remain open until 4:00 P.M. on the following Monday. Applications will be received by the Department between October 15 and December 1 of each year. Proposals received after this date will not be eligible.

Proposed projects must be responsive to the objectives identified in this RFP. Each proposal must be limited to one project or activity only, the title of which must appear on the cover sheet of the application.

SELECTION PROCESS

Selection of successful proposals will be on a competitive basis. All proposals will be judged against the following criteria consistent with the stated objectives of the Program. The degree to which the proposed activity:

- Addresses a significant, identified industry need or opportunity, and environmental concern
- Demonstrates potential for near-term direct commercial application
- Responds to the purposes and objectives outlined in the solicitation and Program guidelines
- Demonstrates economic development potential measured in terms of job creation, capital investment or other identifiable economic activity
- Is innovative and original

The percentage to which the proposal:

- Presents a reasonable and feasible approach
- Adequately details a work plan and time frame for completion
- Contains clearly defined deliverables
- Demonstrates experience and ability of proposer and project staff to undertake the proposed activity
- Evidences industry support
- Is cost effective, relative to similar proposals submitted, work to be performed, and product to be delivered

All proposals must include sufficient information to allow the above factors to be judged. Only those proposals which furnish complete information will be considered for evaluation. No partial proposals will be considered. The Commissioner of the Department of Food and Agriculture reserves the right to make a final selection upon approval of the Board of Food and Agriculture.

AWARDS

The Department of Food and Agriculture will fund contracts up to \$50,000 under the Program. Grant monies will not be awarded as lump sums at the initiation of the projects. Grant payments will be made for services received during or at the end of the contract period. Persons awarded a contract will be notified on or about February 15. Each applicant whose proposal is not chosen for funding will be notified to that effect in writing, by the Department.

CONTRACT

The Department will not reward a contract to any person unwilling to sign a standard form contract ("Contract"). Upon receipt and acceptance of a proposal, the Department will forward a copy of the Contract to the proponent. The Department will consider amending the Contract only upon receipt of written, specific proposed language changes by April 1st. Payments pursuant to the terms of the contract cannot be made until the contract is fully executed by all required agencies. Typically this takes about 30 days.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Department of Food and Agriculture will be responsible for monitoring each funded project and ensuring that the terms of the contract are fulfilled. Specific monitoring and reporting terms and conditions of each funded project will be contained in a formal contract.

At a minimum, an original and three copies of a comprehensive final report will be required under the contract. The final report shall include a detailed description of the work completed under the contract as it related to the plan of work, a description of the problems encountered during the project which affected the completion of the plan of work and attainment of project goals and objectives, a statement of the likelihood of implementation of project results including but not limited to jobs created or retained, new capital investment, environmental concern addressed, new or increased agricultural product or commodity sales or increased profit, and number of acres of farmland potentially affected by the project. The report will also contain a final budget showing costs borne by all fiscal participants.

In addition to the final project report, the Department reserves the right to conduct a follow-up survey of funded projects in order to determine long term impacts.

LIABILITY

The Department will not be held liable for any costs incurred by any firm or individual for work performed in the preparation of and production of a proposal or for any work performed prior to the formal execution of a contract.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Any applicant awarded a contract should be aware of the following:

The originals of all finished and unfinished documents, data, studies, reports, manuals, materials or other "deliverables" identified in the contract, and paid for with contract funds, shall become the property of the Department, and the Commonwealth shall have title and own the copyright in such "deliverables". "Deliverables" also includes any equipment or furnishings provided by the Department or purchased with contract funds.

The contractor shall have a royalty free non-exclusive and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use these "deliverables". The contractor shall not make any application for patent or copyright of any "deliverables".

The Department of Food and Agriculture is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Women, Minorities, Veterans and Handicapped persons are encouraged to apply.

This RFP is available in alternative formats upon request.

Proposed Budget

	DFA	Matching Funds and Expenses			
CATEGORY	Grant Funds	Cash Expenses	Inkind	Match Total	Category Total
Salaries and Wages	*				
Consultants					
Travel					
Supplies & Materials					
Communications					
Advertising/Promotion					
Other					
TOTAL:		**		***	
PROJECT TOTAL:					

* No more than 50% of DFA grant funds may be used in the salary & wage category
 ** Cash expenses must be at least 50% of total match
 *** Total match must be at least 50% of total project cost

